

GOVERNANCE ON THE AGENDA

In recent months, IMHE has held two major meetings on the governance of higher education institutions. This report summarises some of the main points of discussion.

24 and 25 August 2006 *Roles and Responsibilities of Institutional Governing Bodies*

11, 12 and 13 September 2006
Values and Ethics: Managing Challenges and Realities in Higher Education

Higher educational institutions' role in relation to society is, and has always been, conditioned by the expectations and pressures from the wider community. As was pointed out at the Meeting of OECD Education Ministers in Athens 27-28 June 2006, higher education plays an increasingly vital role in driving economic growth and social cohesion. Today, expectations of higher education have changed beyond recognition (OECD, 2003, *Changing Patterns of Governance in Higher Education*¹). In many OECD countries, the role of higher education institutions is assessed in terms of their contribution to the economy, their ability to provide cutting edge knowledge from research, as well as their ability to produce graduates with skills and knowledge who can contribute to the growth of the so-called knowledge economies. At the same time, higher education institutions are expected to play a role as a social vehicle in terms of enhancing opportunities to widen participation for those who have not so far benefited from traditional higher education. Higher education institutions are under unprecedented pressure to meet these different expectations from the society at large. The two conferences

highlighted a number of critical issues higher education institutions are facing in achieving such a balance.

The two events, in a complementary way, brought issues such as ethics, values and the role of institutional governing bodies together, and posed all the fundamental questions higher education institutions are facing today. Among the principal questions discussed during the two events are:

- How do higher education institutions balance all these different expectations?
- Whose values are higher education institutions representing?
- Who is higher education for and who is benefiting?
- How can policy communities help to better shape the quality of higher education systems?
- What are the intended policy consequences and unintended consequences?
- In what ways is globalisation re-shaping higher education institutions and their behaviour?

It would be useful to draw attention to some of the new institutional and policy contexts in which higher education institutions are playing their roles that were pointed out by a number of speakers during the two IMHE events. Firstly, as mentioned by a number of speakers in the two events (Ward, Froment, Watson – *September*), universities are located in a global environment and face growing competitive pressure due to ranking and internationalisation. Also, universities need to diversify income

→ **Higher education plays an increasingly vital role in driving economic growth and social cohesion.**

sources and one of the channels is through the commercialisation of research (Bexell – *September*). There is a growing expectation on the part of industry and business that universities will meet some of their immediate needs, and external stakeholders are increasing their voice in university activities. Consequently, the knowledge that universities produce is put into a context that induces conflicts of interest and political pressure (Weiler – *September*).

There is a growing trend for universities to emulate corporate principles of governance, to be more responsive to external pressures and to be more efficient (various speakers – *August*; de la Garanderie – *September*). Higher education institutions are becoming increasingly diversified (Sadjak – *September*). The changing composition of the student body, e.g. more international students, more mature students who are working and studying at the same time, and new financial structures, such as introduction of tuition fees – are accelerating the diversification of needs and values, and highlighting the asymmetric and uneven nature of globalisation processes.

There are new ways of delivering higher education, such as e-learning and cross-border education. Private and public institutions compete.

Internationalisation and diversification of programmes (e.g. for-profit provision, e-learning) and international mobility of students and the highly skilled pose new challenges (Marginson – *September*). Finally, as was repeatedly pointed out, universities are required to be responsive to local and community needs and take on more

¹ *Education Policy Analysis*, OECD Publishing, 2003 Edition



social responsibilities, as well as being responsive to international markets. All these issues require rediscovering a new philosophy in higher education (Rouvilleo – *September*), finding the linkages between education and citizenship, and engaging students as the centre of university activities (Fenech, Michavila, *et al.* – *September*).

These changing institutional contexts highlight the importance of governance and the role of higher education governing bodies. There are a number of inter-related challenges in the field of higher education governance and management being faced by OECD countries. A “One Size” governance solution will not fit all. There is an increasing trend for

→ **A “One Size” governance solution will not fit all.**

interests of different stakeholders, including a board of external members, academic staff, administrative staff and those of students, is one of the biggest challenges. How do institutions reconcile the directions of increased institutional accountability to society, and internal effective resource management? Allan Larsson, in his keynote address to the August seminar used the metaphor of the “Bermuda Triangle” – “nobody knows where the initiative comes from” and “nobody knows where and how everything disappears”, describing the relationship between the government, governing board and Vice Chancellor.

At the end of the August seminar, speakers pointed out that a key institutional issue for the future is how



universities to emulate corporate principles of governance and codes of conduct of governing bodies, to be more responsive to external pressures, and to be more efficient (various speakers – *August* ; de la Garanderie – *September*). It is important to note that “governance” is a process not only restricted to the governing bodies of higher education institutions, but that it is also a process related to a whole set of institutional processes surrounding higher education institutions in the wider social setting. Governance functions within a wider ethical framework. The critical questions are: who is engaging with management? What is the value of a governing board? How to measure performance? How can universities learn from the private corporate sector? (Larsson – *August*).

Striking the right balance between the

to create an environment that will provide the incentive and metrics necessary for effective institutional governance, while at the same time preserving the intellectual integrity and autonomy of the research community. At the end of the event, a strong consensus emerged that the HEI communities need to search for new management and governance systems to meet new challenges in the society at large.

These challenges constitute broader issues concerning social and cultural values, ethical issues and how to govern these issues at institutional level. As Elaine El-Khawas noted during the wrap-up session of the September Conference, it is rather unusual to deal with issues of ethics and values as main topics of conferences like this one. Nevertheless, this Conference, held at the French Ministry of Education,

Higher Education and Research, and attended by 210 participants from 35 countries, witnessed intensive discussions over three days, covering a wide range of issues, including *Values, Ethics and Research*; *Values, Ethics and Teaching*; *Values, Ethics, Governance and Internal Management*; and *Values Ethics and Society*. The urgent search for new governance and management approaches resonated throughout this Conference while it also became clear that differences in institutional missions and settings and cultural contexts also have to be borne in mind.

To sum up, the two events drew attention to the following common issues:

1. The importance of recognising the diversity of higher education systems.
2. The increase of external pressures on higher education institutions and the greater need for universities to be proactive and keep public trust.
3. The importance of the relationships between the governing bodies, senior management and the academic bodies within the institutions.
4. The importance of bringing students to the centre of the dialogue.
5. The importance of being responsive to cultural specificity when seeking universal principles.

In the closing session of the September Conference, there was a lively discussion about whether or not there should be guidelines for higher education institutions concerning “good governance”. Sharing good practices, learning from existing experience - both from the corporate and higher education sector - building consensus, and further exploration of this area of dynamic change were all suggested as steps that could be taken to improve governance. This would require more co-operation among higher education institutions, governments and international agencies. IMHE, as an international network of higher education institutions, and also as part of the OECD, will provide a fertile and unique forum for future dialogue in this area.

The IMHE welcomes the following new members:

- > Macquarie University of Sydney – Australia
- > Laurea University of Applied Sciences – Finland
- > Turku University of Applied Sciences – Finland
- > Institut Polytechnique de Grenoble – France
- > Saxion Universities of Applied Sciences – Netherlands
- > Manchester Metropolitan University – United Kingdom

SURVEY ON IMHE INFO

The purpose of this survey is to help us to adapt *IMHE Info* to the needs and expectations of readers. The deadline has been extended to allow a maximum of participants to express their views.

We would like to thank you in advance for your participation. The online survey is at the following address: www.oecd.org/edu/imheinfosurvey

■ IMHE's Secretariat team is changing.

Jacqueline Smith retires. During her 19 years in the Secretariat, Jacqueline held many different positions. She began her career as an assistant editor for the journal and culminated it as a senior analyst and deputy to the Head of Programme. She left us at the end of October and will be sorely missed. We wish her continued health and happiness in her new life.

■ Funding Systems and their Effects on Higher Education Systems

14 September 2006, Paris, France. This seminar, which attracted over 70 participants, was based on the results of an international comparative study on funding systems and their effects on higher education. The study was conducted in Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Brazil, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Portugal and the Slovak Republic. The final report will be published early in 2007.

■ Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development – Copenhagen Wrap-up Conference on 16-17 Oct

Nearly 120 representatives of universities, regional development agencies, local and national government and the business sector gathered in Copenhagen for a wrap-up conference of the IMHE project on higher education and regional development. The conference was offered free-of-charge, courtesy of IMHE in cooperation with HEFCE, the Copenhagen Business School, Oresund University and the Copenhagen University. It gave an

opportunity to the 14 regions participating in the review to share experiences with each other and the project leadership. It was well timed, since by mid-October all review visits had been completed.

There were interactive work group sessions with more than 30 case studies from different regions, as well as the United States. Discussions covered the following themes:

- Balancing uneven development within and between regions
- Attracting talent to and retaining it in the regions
- Meeting demands for world class research and quality teaching, with regional and societal relevance
- Bridging the gap between higher education and industry
- Developing competences in regional engagement in higher education institutions and their stakeholders

Presentations, abstracts and the conference programme are available on the website.

www.oecd.org/edu/higher/regionaldevelopment
On 28 November, the Nuevo León Peer Review Report was launched in Monterrey with Mr. Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the OECD, as an honorary speaker. The final synthesis report of the IMHE project and the recommendations will be published and distributed at a policy conference in Valencia on 19-21 September 2007. For more information, contact imhe@oecd.org.

■ IMHE has just launched its new 2004-2006 activities report.

For more information on our conferences, books or activities, the activities report is on www.oecd.org/edu/higher

■ Secretariat's visit to the University of Helsinki

from Jacqueline Smith, former Analyst at IMHE Secretariat. Finland has a strong representation in IMHE, and the University of Helsinki has been an active member since the Programme was created. It has hosted several IMHE meetings, and authors from the University have contributed articles to the journal *Higher Education Management*.

Experts have frequently taken part in conferences as presenters, chairs, participants. For many years now, the University of Helsinki has used IMHE to widen the international experience of its young researchers and administrators. In addition, the Finnish representatives in the Governing Board of IMHE have frequently come from the University of Helsinki. Both IMHE and the institution have benefited from this partnership.

During my visit, in October 2006, I met Dr. Matti Kilpiö, who is one of the leading specialists on Old English Corpus in the world and works in *Varieng*, a top research unit of the Faculty of Humanities. A text written in 11th century English looks like a completely different language, and it is. Dr Kilpiö can write poetry in that language, but, more importantly for students, he can translate and explain all texts in such a way that the language comes to life and one can actually feel the link with our ancestors.

University of Helsinki in numbers:

- 40 000 students (undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates, not including open university and adult learners) one fourth of all university students in Finland
- Over 11 000 staff members: researchers and teachers, other staff, part time staff



Mrs Sinikka Mertano, former Head of Administration and Prof. Ilkka Niiniluoto, Rector of the University of Helsinki

- Facilities in 4 campuses in the Helsinki area, plus in several other places in the country cover over 600 000 m²
- Eleven faculties
- 63 departments and over 60 institutes, centres and stations
- Some 80 cooperation agreements with universities in different continents
- A dynamic student union as stakeholder (even partner).

World renowned researchers have worked at the University of Helsinki. For example, Professor Yrjö V. Paatero developed the method of orthopantography in this institution; his first instrument is now exhibited in the University Museum *Arppeanum*. Professor Artturi Virtanen won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1945. This very large and complex institution requires skilful management, visionary steering and strong support at national level, provided by Dr. Kari Raivio, Chancellor and Professor of Perinatology, Dr. Ilkka Niiniluoto, Rector and Professor of Philosophy, and Mr. Kari Suokko, Head of Administration. Visit the University of Helsinki at www.helsinki.fi/university/ – or try to go in person!

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Academic Libraries: 2004, NCES, November 2006

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007301>

The selected findings and tables in this report, based on the 2004 Academic Libraries Survey, summarise services, staff, collections, and expenditures of academic libraries in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.



Schooling for Tomorrow. Demand-Sensitive Schooling? Evidence and Issues, OECD Publishing, 9264028404

Many educational experts are identifying a critical shift from

supply-led systems — operating to procedures decided by educational authorities, schools and teachers — towards systems which are much more sensitive to demand. But, whose demands should these be? What are they? And how will schools recognise and cope with them? This book examines different aspects of the demand concept and presents international evidence from Austria, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Denmark, England, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Spain, and the United States to reveal attitudes and expectations.

Measuring the Effects of Education on Health and Civic Engagement, OECD

www.oecd.org/edu/socialoutcomes/symposium

The educational systems of OECD economies continue to grow and with this the total amount of resources dedicated to the total learning effort is reaching unprecedented levels. Are the resources organised and used in a way that fulfils what society intends educational systems to achieve? Do the educational systems provide the right forms and types of learning opportunities? Are the learning opportunities offered at the right time and distributed over the lifespan in the best possible way?

IMHE CALENDAR

25-27 April 2007 *Rethinking North America: Higher Education, Regional Identities and Global Challenges*, CONAHEC's 11th Conference, with the support of IMHE, Quebec, Canada. Deadline for the Call for proposals: 18 December 2006 www.conahec.org/conahec/Conferences  Contact: svalle@email.arizona.edu

25-27 June 2007 *Higher Education in the 21st Century – Diversity of Missions*, IMHE, DIT conference, Dublin, Ireland  Contact: ellen.hazelkorn@dit.ie

3-4 September 2007 *Supporting Success and Productivity: Practical Tools for Making your University a Great Place to Work*, University of Cambridge, Harvard University, Universitas 21 and IMHE, Paris, France.  Contact: valerie.lafon@oecd.org

19-21 Sept. 2007 *Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development*, International conference, Valencia, Spain.  Contact: jaana.puukka@oecd.org

Find all our meetings on
www.oecd.org/edu/imhemeetings

OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

29-31 March 2007 *Europe's Universities Beyond 2010 – Diversity with a Common Purpose* 4th EUA Convention, Lisbon, Portugal. www.eua.be

12-15 Sept. 2007  *19th Annual EAIE Conference*, Trondheim, Norway. www.eaie.org

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IMHE-Info is published in English and French by the OECD Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE). Excerpts from this newsletter may be reproduced with full reference. Please send inquiries, comments and items to be considered for publication to:

Valérie Lafon, Editor IMHE Programme, OECD
 2, rue André-Pascal
 75775 Paris Cedex 16 – France
 Tel: (33) 1 45 24 92 24 or (33) 1 45 24 75 84
 Fax: (33) 1 44 30 61 76
imhe@oecd.org
www.oecd.org/edu/higher